A New Synthetic Treatment of Contemporary Western Lyricism

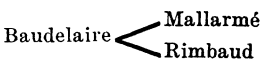
Hugo Friedrich's new book, *Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik von Baudelaire bis zur Gegenwart*,[1] is intended as one link in a chain of publications of "Rowohlts Deutsche Enzyklopädie," destined to enlighten the general German public about the present status of research in the different fields of scholarship. While easily readable for a public of high intellectual capacities, it represents also a scholarly achievement in its own right, as we might have expected it from Hugo Friedrich who, now that death has claimed Ernst Robert Curtius, is unquestionably the greatest German literary critic in Romance. Having begun with a comparative study (*Abbé Prévost in Deutschland*, 1929), he conquered one Romance literature after the other, writing about anti-romantic thought in France (1935), Descartes (1937), Stendhal, Balzac and Flaubert (1939), later branching out into Italian (*Die Rechtsmetaphysik der Göttlichen Komödie*, 1941) and then into Spanish literature (*Der fremde Calderón*, 1955). His great master work is his *Montaigne* (1949) which seems to me the most intelligent comprehensive appraisal of that elusive philosopher which I know.

At the end of a short *vita* appended to the present volume, Professor Friedrich characterizes his whole activity as showing "predilection for unsentimental poets" and aversion against the method called *Erlebnis und Dichtung*. The same sympathy and the same aversion have inspired the author in this book. Whoever is aware of the dangers of emotionalism and intuitionism for German literary scholarship will

[1] (Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1956), 214 pp.

appreciate the work of a scholar who, by his choice both of subject matter and method, shows a deep affinity with the intellectualism of Romance literature and Romance literary criticism. A book of Friedrich's is always distinguished by clear concepts, elegant definitions, serene judgment and terse, unemotional writing. He shows similar equipoise in the skilful dosage of the historical and the descriptive approach: in his *Montaigne,* for instance, all the possible 'sources' used by the essayist are duly displayed and gauged, but the protagonist of the book remains Montaigne in his uniqueness. This tendency has led to serious disagreement with Curtius whose inclination, growing with the years, toward dissolving the great literary figures by what Friedrich calls " Kontinuitätsdenken " met with his strong opposition.

The title of the book under discussion first filled me with misgivings: given the manifold anarchic tendencies of modern lyricism, would it be possible for a critic to succeed in the attempt to master the chaos and to discover that intellectual unity implied by the term " structure "? But in fact, Friedrich's work splendidly fulfills the promise of his title. Indeed, undisturbed by labels such as Expressionism, Dadaism, Futurism, Unanimism, Hermetism, Surrealism, etc., Friedrich convincingly shows, as only a literary historian of his width of horizon could have done, a relative unity in all these movements—a unity which can be traced back to only one particular period and country in which the archetype of contemporary lyrics first appeared. Thus Friedrich has done for European poetry something similar to what was achieved by Diez for the Romance languages: the reconstruction, on the basis of a comparative study of the existing variants, of their historical archetype (only here the archetype can be grasped more easily because, contrary to Vulgar Latin, it exists in the clear light of history) whose milieu Friedrich defines as the late nineteenth century in France. Thus it was France that in the nineteenth century established, so to speak, the lyrical mother tongue for Europe just as it had provided the " epic tongue " par excellence in the twelfth century. It would be possible to reword a famous adage by saying (*au XIXe siècle*) *le Français a la tête lyrique.* Such a discovery will displease the chauvinist littérateurs in certain countries, especially the Spaniards who, according to Friedrich, are only too ready to assert their national independence (or dependence only on the Spaniard Góngora). But Friedrich has shown beyond doubt that the triangle



in nuce contains all subsequent discoveries and experiments as they appear in the twentieth-century poetry of England (America), Spain, Italy, Germany.

Friedrich's method consists in working, as it were, from both ends toward the middle; thus he will, in the chapters on the three great Frenchmen, anticipate the developments that they have initiated while in the crowning chapter on twentieth-century Western lyricism taken as a whole, he reminds us of what it owes to that French ancestry. As for the antecedents of Baudelaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Novalis, and other romantics are treated in an introductory chapter, whereas Baudelaire's indebtedness to Poe is woven into the chapter about the former. Since Friedrich excludes from his book all poetry that is not "modern" in his sense (that is poetry asking for the consensus of the reader, a Goethean or Hugoesque tradition which survives in Germany, for instance, in George, Hofmannsthal and the early Rilke, in Italy in the oratory of D'Annunzio), Baudelaire comes to a position, comparable to that of Goethe in his time, as the initiator of all "modern" lyrics (and this term includes "contemporary" lyrics), the parallelism with Flaubert's influence on European prose fiction being duly noted. The *stupide XIXe siècle* proves after all not to have been as "stupid" as its amateurish detractors wished it to be: this is one of the insights one gains from Friedrich's book. From Baudelaire as a starting point, there branch off then two main directions embodied in Mallarmé and Rimbaud, the one the form-respecting destroyer of the things of the outward world (which he replaces by attractions, contrasts, tensions), the other the form-destroying destroyer of all aggregates of things (who delights in "sensuous irrealism"), both having in common, with each other and with their ancestor, the profound hatred against things-as-they-are and things-as-they-are-commonly-represented—a reflection of the isolation of the poet in the midst of leveling political, technical, and rationalizing processes in the society around him. The poets of today who generally, and often to a higher degree, share this situation, and the attitude toward it, with their predecessors fall into the two main categories of Mallarméism or Rimbaudism. Also in modern art, whose connections with modern poetry Friedrich consistently points out, we witness the same two main tendencies which have been defined by Kandinsky as the striving toward "the great abstraction" and "the great reality." Professor Friedrich has found an ingenious device in order to make the reader grasp the basic unity between the "French triangle" and contemporary lyricism: he offers in each of the three

first chapters subdivisions entitled according to those abiding features that will characterize the lyrics to come and conversely, in the final chapter on contemporary lyrics, subdivisions and titles that to a certain degree recapitulate those of the preceding chapters. Thus we are able to gauge the unity of the lyricism of the last hundred years by comparing the subchapters of the section on Baudelaire (the poet of modernity—concentration and awareness of form—lyricism and mathematics—modernity as an end-product—the aristocratic pleasure of displeasing—precarious Christianity—void idealism—magic of language—creative imagination—decomposition and deformation—abstraction and arabesque) with some of the subchapters of the chapter on twentieth-century lyricism (feast of the intellect, collapse of the intellect—incongruent style of the new lyrical language—Apollo, not Dionysos—twofold relationship toward modernity and the literary heritage—dehumanization—isolation and anguish—magic of language and suggestion—alogical poetry—reality—dictatorial imagination—fusion technique and metaphors).

One will notice the " twofoldness " of the titles in the latter chapter (which comprehends Mallarméism and Rimbaudism) while Baudelaire appears more unified. It must be also noted that form and content are taken together in both series of titles. Certain titles are perhaps traditional (Ortega!), others are coinages of Friedrich himself (for instance, the title " void idealism " ably characterizes Baudelaire's enmity against the given world which is, however, not coupled with a positive creed). In addition to his anticipative-recapitulative method and to his fusion of form and content Friedrich resorts in all chapters to *explication de texte* as illustration for his characterization of general trends. In the last chapter that has to deal with the enormous masses of contemporary international lyricism we find in the titles of subdivisions names of great poets (which I have left out in the diagram quoted above) alternating with the definitions of general tendencies: Apollinaire and García Lorca (obviously a diptych that reproduces the previous diptych Rimbaud-Mallarmé); Paul Valéry—Jorge Guillén—García Lorca again (exemplification by one poem, *Romance sonámbulo*)—T. S. Eliot—Saint-John Perse. (No German or Italian poet of today receives from Friedrich's hands the honor of a separate subchapter.) Thus with Friedrich, historical treatment does not crowd out the great poetic individualities. Neither are the latter subordinated to national categories (only the Spaniards are seen within their particular national framework). The comments on

all the poets are based on the original texts (generally accompanied by translations) which are found either in the text of the author or in an appendix. The last two lines of the work reveal Friedrich's general attitude toward modern lyrics: "One may love it or reject it, but this must be a love or a rejection based on an intellectual act" (*Erkennen*). Mr. Friedrich has *erkannt* modern lyrics and has in the end not come out with a rejection, an attitude to be highly praised if we remember his statement at the beginning of his book that he is no "avant-guardist by principle" and feels "more at home" with Goethe than with T. S. Eliot. It was then not with emotional bias, but with intellectual empathy that he has been able to study with so much love and labor those phenomena which at first sight are the most disconcerting that poetry has ever produced. When faced with so unprejudiced a historical treatment of contemporary subject matter, we cannot withhold from the author our deep-felt homage. He may serve as an example of "personal culture without resentments," especially to us in this country where I so often feel that scholars study, for example, the medieval literature because they like its theocratic thought and dislike the free-thinking side of the Renaissance or, conversely, study Renaissance literature because they dislike medieval theocracy, being in other words, not equipped to study both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance because of some fanaticism (pro or con) lurking behind their scholarly endeavors.

Very helpful indexes (particularly a most welcome index of subject matter which sometimes suggests to us new *rapprochements*), a bibliography reduced to the most essential data and a chronological table (with such witty juxtapositions as: "1885 Death of Victor Hugo in Paris"—"1885 birth of Ezra Pound in Haily, U. S. A.," or "1926 Rilke's death in Val-Mont, Switzerland"—"1927 T. S. Eliot becomes an English citizen") conclude the volume, so slight in appearance, so strong in impact.

This does however not imply that the work is beyond criticism. As to material included, an Anglo-Saxon public will be surprised to find missing such great names as G. M. Hopkins (with his "realism of disrealization") or Walt Whitman (the discoverer of what I called in a book mentioned in Friedrich's bibliography "chaotic enumeration"). Furthermore, among the ancestors of "sensuous irrealism" surely Rabelais, Quevedo and Gracián would have deserved an outstanding place. It is also regrettable that, for reasons probably connected with publisher's economies, not *all* the poems commented on

in detail can be read in the appendix and, conversely, that not all the poems printed in the appendix have been commented upon in the text (and also that no poem of the late Rilke has been analyzed).

A more essential weakness of our book is due to the occasional inability of the author, as of so many literary critics endowed with a keen sense for linguistic innovation, to present his pertinent observations within the proper linguistic framework. For example, Friedrich infers (p. 129) from the final line of Gottfried Benn's poem "Welle der Nacht": "die weisse Perle rollt zurück ins Meer" that since no pearl had been mentioned before, rather a general movement of rolling, the definite article is meant to be "a phonetic sign of the absolute movement" (of the rolling back) and to give this "determinant" an "indeterminate," mysterious connotation. But if we consider the whole stanza:

> Welle der Nacht—, zwei Muscheln miterkoren,
> die Fluten strömen sie, die Felsen her,
> dann Diadem und Purpur mitverloren,
> die weisse Perle rollt zurück ins Meer,

we see the forward rolling movement ("miterkoren") embodied in two (worthless) shells, while we lose to the receding waves "diadem and purple" as well as "the white pearl"—the idea obviously being that the wave takes back much more than it brings to the shore. "Diadem and purple" are the insignia of past grandeur (of the Istrian palace now vacant, mentioned in stanza 1—the whole poem is centered on the wave-like passing of majesty)—a grandeur climaxed by the final mention of the white pearl. "Diadem and purple" are in this context as unexpected (or mysterious) as the pearl. The definite article that accompanies the latter, just as in expressions like 'the best, the top,' may thus be considered as the article of superlativity (the final position of the pearl also serves the visual effect of whiteness in the night).

In the poem "Genazzano" by M.-L. Kaschnitz:

> Genazzano am Abend
> Winterlich
> Gläsernes Klappern
> Der Eselshufe
> Steilauf die Bergstadt.
> Hier stand ich am Brunnen
> Hier wusch ich mein Brauthemd
> Hier wusch ich mein Totenhemd
> Mein Gesicht lag weiss

10 Unterm schwarzen Wasser
Im wehenden Laub der Platanen.
Meine Hände waren zwei Klumpen Eis
Fünf Zapfen an jeder
Die klirrten

Friedrich finds that while the first five lines with their nominal sentences contain "something like a real event" in "empirical time" the following verbs, in the preterite, render unreal, dreamlike events and since some of these are future events the preterite becomes in truth a "supratemporal tense" that ignores the "Zeitstufen." This analysis leaves out line 6 which shows a preterite expressing a real event and, in its pivotal rôle, must influence our understanding of the meaning both of what precedes and of what follows it: by the preterite *hier stand ich* we understand retroactively that the upward movement which has come to an end in line 6 (*Klappern der Eselshufe steilauf . . .*) must have been meant to be in the preterite (= *die Eselshufe klapperten steilauf . . .*). Again, line 6 ushers in also the vision which has for the poet the same reality (therefore the preterite) as the factual standing at the well (witness the anaphora *hier* that similarly bridges the gap between reality and dream). The following preterites do not include a future (of planned suicide) nor are they meant "supratemporally," but they indicate a past that was lived through in the dream. The effect of the poem resides in the gradual passage from a reality that includes cold of winter and glasslike clatter to a vision of death that contains similar elements: cold and clattering ice. Between these two states stands the well, the end of the journey in reality, the potentiality of death in the dream. Death moves into reality imperceptibly or magically—and the uninterrupted preterites render precisely this gradual invasion.

At times Friedrich may stress a linguistic point overly much while omitting one a linguist would find all-important. In Benn's poem "Bilder," according to Friedrich, the articulation achieved is due, not to syntax, but to variation of emphasis or tone: he is led to the negative part of his statement by what he calls the "veiled" character of the hypothetic period. But in reality the period that takes up the whole poem is most clearly articulated by syntactic means: the thrice repeated *siehst du . . .* (ll. 1, 13, 15) is as clearly a hypothetic clause as the *du siehst* is a clear apodosis, for the feeling of a German, and the use of the same word material, *siehst du—du siehst*, rather enhances the

stringency of the conclusion drawn (cf. the even more identical and therefore even more conclusive wording in Chamisso: "*Du fragest* nach den Riesen, *du findest* sie nicht mehr"). In contrast to his overemphasis on the hypothetic period, Friedrich says nothing of the extraordinary syntactical fact that in the list of the features of old age (depicted in modern paintings) two are clearcut nominatives, not accusatives as the verb *siehst du* would normally require it: . . . *käsiger Bart* . . . *ein Lebensabend* . . . : it is as though the ugly things painted emancipated themselves from the syntactic texture, achieving a kind of destructive autonomy as they often appear to the bewildered beholders of modern paintings, while, on the contrary, the firmly organized period *siehst du—du siehst* presents a framework (syntactical, as well as mental) by which order (in this case the correct evaluation of pictures, however ugly, as works of the "great genius") is re-established.

Mr. Friedrich seems at times fascinated by the boundless power of language as such (if I may thus translate his term "eigenmächtige Sprache"): often, he claims, the modern lyrical poet is "alone with his language," and allows it to go where it wishes, defying any rational interpretation. For example, in Ungaretti's poem *L'Isola*:

A una proda ove sera era perenne
Di anziane selve assorte, scese,
E, s'inoltrò
E lo richiamò rumore di penne
Ch'erasi sciolto dallo stridulo
Batticuore dell' acqua torrida,
E una larva (languiva
E rifioriva) vide;
Ritornato a salire vide
Ch'era una ninfa e dormiva
Ritta abbracciata a un olmo.
In sé da simulacro a fiamma vera
Errando, giunse a un prato ove
L'ombra negli occhi s'addensava
Delle vergini come
Sera appiè degli ulivi;
Distillavano i rami
Una pioggia pigra di dardi,
Qua pecore s'erano appisolate
Sotto il liscio tepore,
Altre brucavano
La coltre luminosa;
Le mani del pastore erano un vetro
Levigato di fioca febbre

the final "metaphoric dissonance" (hands like glass), coming as a climax after so many "hermetic" features such as the pronoun 'he,' an "indeterminate determinant," and statements evoking rather "lines of movement" (arrival, encounter, rest) than pastoral things and beings (island, woods, nymph, shepherd, sheep), points to a level of "eigenmächtige Sprache." Here, it seems to me, the literary critic, more overawed by the mystery of language than a linguist would be, has abdicated too early and concedes too much to meaningless language. The 'he,' a generic pronoun serving as an "exemplifying" device just as much as, in all lyrical poetry through the ages, an 'I' or 'you' would do, is shown in the beginning of our poem engaged in a movement downward (to the shore of the island and to ancient forests located on the shore) when he is called back to the heights (*lo richiamò* = 'called him back,' not 'attracted him'; *ritornato a salire* 'he turned again to the ascent')—and there, proceeding from "appearances" (the ghost who becomes a nymph) to the "true flame," he finds a meadow with virgins in whose eyes shadows have gathered just as "the evening [*sera* = nominative, not 'in the evening'] gathers around the olive-trees"—obviously the only trace of darkness in this dazzling landscape—with trees emitting a "lazy rain of arrows," with animals asleep in the "smooth" (not "soft") tepid atmosphere or grazing on the "shining cover" of the lawn—and then finally there appear the glass-like hands of the shepherd "polished by dull fever." It seems clear that we have here the picture of a Southern island made of heat, torpor, laziness, light, consuming sensuous love: the hands of the shepherd have become "polished glass" (a motif anticipated by the epithet *liscio* 'smooth') through the scorching flame of love in that torrid climate in which the amorous fever, never exploding, but persistent, has burnt all organic living matter in the lover. We have here what I would call in German a *Verdinglichung*, a materialization of the pastoral themes of the flame of love and of the island of love (and this *Verdinglichung*, also to be observed in the end of Lorca's *Romance sonámbulo* and Kaschnitz's poem quoted above, is a foil to the *Entdinglichung* or disrealization characteristic of modern poetry—both tendencies leading away from the observable model in the outward world). This *Verdinglichung* is the modern, more radical counterpart to *préciosité* in which metaphors were *suivies jusqu'au bout*.[2] Once this is

[2] Or to the conceits of a Quevedo whose "logique conceptuelle" Amédée Mas in his recent book *La Caricature de la femme . . . dans l'oeuvre de Quevedo* (Paris, 1957) has duly emphasized. For example, when Quevedo assures us

understood all motifs in the poem become clearly visualizable and the language appears in strict accord with the dictation of imagination—which is not of a verbal, but of a "materializing" kind.

Similarly, I believe that Friedrich (p. 75) is overrating language when he states that in Mallarmé's poem *Sainte* (which was first called *Sainte Cécile jouant sur l'aile d'un chérubin*) the *Entdinglichung* has brought the poet to the point where events and things described exist "not in reality, but only in language" ("nicht in der Sache, sondern in der Sprache"). While I am in full agreement with Friedrich's judgment as to disrealization (the old instruments *viole, flûte, mandore* and the missal with the Magnificat serve no longer), I must point out the absolute reality of the Saint who is still that Saint Cecilia who dropped her own musical instruments in order to listen to celestial music and who is played upon, as if she herself were an instrument, by the angel. She has thus become an active-inactive *musicienne du silence* (notice that according to Pythagorean ideas the silence of the spheres is only their music which human ears are unable to hear). Thus the spiritual, physically unhearable music that plays within the saint is a "real" fact, no *flatus vocis* of language. While there exists no actual mass in which the Magnificat might be sung there develops, at the window where the Saint is sitting, a spiritual mass (as the expression *vitrage d'ostensoir* shows) in which the Saint may repeat the vows of Hannah and Mary: *Magnificat anima mia.* Notice also the pallor of the Saint which indicates the approach of death which brings her close to martyrdom and Paradise. The poem with its overtones of Pythagorean-Christian world harmony stands much more in a long tradition than Friedrich seems to have realized.

Again, in the sonnet *Éventail* (*de Madame Mallarmé*), which Friedrich takes mainly as an *ars poetica* dealing not with the fan but with Mallarmé's poetry or the poetry of the future, he stresses *Entdinglichung* (disrealization) because things in this poem exist only in their absence, "are present only in language." But I disagree first with the statement that, in opposition to former *poésie galante,* "tender feelings or gallantry" are missing in the poem (this would be the *dehumanización* of Ortega): on the contrary all in it (that is the long sentence which takes up these stanzas) tends toward the final

that his soul, his veins, his marrow burning of love will, when death comes, become "feeling ashes" and "loving dust," this is the same extreme of "materialization within the logic of a conceit" as in Ungaretti's poem the hands of the love-burnt shepherd which have become "polished glass."

wish and compliment *Cet éventail . . . limpide . . . toujours tel il apparaisse/entre tes mains sans paresse.* Secondly, while I do not deny that, as always with Mallarmé, delicate relationships appear between art (or an *objet d'art*) and poetry, I am convinced that the first stanza is already concerned with the fan (and contains a compliment to its user):

> Avec comme pour langage
> Rien qu'un battement aux cieux
> Le futur vers se dégage
> Du logis très précieux.

"Language" and "verse" refer here not truly to poetry, but to the poetic utterance implied in the flicking of the fan by the lady (notice: "avec *comme* pour language"—the language of the fan is only a metaphoric one): the poet follows with his eyes the actualization of the potential in the fan, which actualization will produce its effect (*le futur vers*) each time it will move away from its *très précieux logis,* the body of the precious person who builds it (a *précieux* compliment in its traditional form: *très précieux*). *Un battement aux cieux* introduces the identification of the fan with the wing (of an angel? again a compliment!) which will be followed up by *aile tout bas la courrière* in the next stanza. This line is taken by Friedrich as an apostrophe lacking syntactical ties with the rest, *tout bas,* translated 'ganz leise,' being the "boldest possible" apostrophe. I would rather analyze *aile-la-courrière* [que] *cet éventail,* the emotional syntactical form for an assertion: the fan *is* the wing of an angel, a "messenger from heaven that flies low [on this earth]," *tout bas* belonging to the *voler* implied in *aile*: with this identification of the fan with a heavenly wing our eyes are lifted beyond the earthly figure of the lady. Now we see behind the lady the mirror in which a bright movement of the fan flickers so that fan and reflection of fan become one: *limpide* at the beginning of stanza 3 can then refer as well to the mirror as to the fan. And now the Ronsardian idea of the frailty of the earthly being who owns the fan appears:

> . . . où va redescendre
> Pourchassée en chaque grain
> Un peu d'invisible cendre
> Seule à me rendre chagrin.

"Redescendre"—before and after the momentary shining of the fan in the mirror a mist of ashes veils the body of the lady, ashes invisible

at the moment, but for ever feared by the poet (*pourchassée en chaque grain,* mistranslated by Friedrich 'in jedem Körnchen verjagt,' means '[ashes whose traces are] anxiously followed by the poet's eyes in each grain of the lady's skin'): the poet is watching the face of the lady for any sign of the approach of old age and death. The moment of beauty when she was flicking her fan against the background of the mirror is seized upon by the poet who wishes for her indirectly, by way of the fan and the mirror—each of which he would have for ever "limpid" (unaltered)—immortality, and this as ardently as any poet of the Pléiade could have done. Indirection (a tribute to a woman by means of a tribute to beautiful things with which she surrounds herself) has always been more effective in lyrics than direct statement: it has been multiplied in our poem written in an age when the poet fears more than ever the *cliché.*

Again in Mallarmé's sonnet that begins *Surgi de la croupe et du bond,* Friedrich sees opaqueness of meaning, "singing mystery," etc. Remembering Mallarmé's utterances about "juggling of words" in his poems, he believes that in the first stanza:

> Surgi de la croupe et du bond
> D'une verrerie éphémère
> Sans fleurir la veillée amère
> Le col ignoré s'interrompt

the two words *croupe* and *bond* are inspired by two other words that are not there: *coupe* and *fond.* Apart from the assumed incongruence of the word *fond,* which expresses something resting at the bottom, supposedly replaced by *bond,* the equivalent of an upward leap, it seems to me more likely that in this stanza there is described the wide-bellied, thin-necked form of a vase without flowers in terms of an animal movement, that of a beast crouched in order to leap, interrupted by the absence of flowers which would prolong and carry to its end the initiated movement. By means of the expressions *ignoré* (that should be translated not 'unrecognized,' but 'ignored') and *veillée amère* (which suggests the waking at a death-bed) a bridge is built to *veuvage,* which symbolizes sterility, frustration, death, and will be the theme of this as of many other poems by Mallarmé. This theme explains the "ephemeral" character of the "glass substance" that can never form a true vase. In the next stanza the vase-that-is-not-a-vase becomes the drinking glass from which the Sylph's parents have failed to drink the drink of true love, that is a drinking glass that is not a true glass. The Sylph himself can be no true human

being, only a vague homunculus, born as he is from the ambivalence of chastity (purity—sterility) : he is doomed (*froid plafond* indicating a tomb). The atmosphere of death is condensed even more in the last two stanzas (*agoniser—expirer—funèbres—ténèbres*) where the flower image (the " rose ") returns only to be denied any existence. Friedrich is right in calling this poem " a poem about negations " (neither vase nor flower nor Sylph exist, what exists is sterility and death), but if he is right language has excellently expressed the " negative category ": why then should the poet, in our poem, by the symbol of the non-existent rose, have deplored the impossibility of " Sprachwerdung," the impossibility for the language to find the " erlösende Wort "? Our poem deals with the negativity, not of language, but of a sterile poetic imagination. Cicero's use of " flower " for " poetic expression " has no bearing on our poem, which contains no allusion to " poetry."

At times it happens that failure to sense the importance of a particular word prevents Friedrich from seeing the full meaning of a poem. Thus for him in *Addii* of Montale (p. 144) the indeterminate *tu* of the second stanza represents only a " remainder of humanity," the main emphasis resting on the inhuman " automatons." But in reality the poet is complaining about a suspected personal attitude of the *tu,* his beloved, in a moment (the farewell) when inner tensions usually become articulate. After having described tersely the mechanical side of a train departure at a railway station, expressing by the line " Forse gli automi hanno ragione " a sceptic submissiveness on his part to the overpowering mechanization of our modern lives, he concludes with the sharp, almost accusing question:

> —Presti anche tu (!) alla fioca
> litania del tuo rapido quest' orrida
> e fedele cadenza di carioca?—

" will you too lend that horrible, submissive rhythm of the (well-known) dance song *carioca* to the hoarse litany of your express train? " —where we obviously have an allusion to the habit of travelers of hearing the rhythm of the train according to their own favorite melody. The poet is horrified by the possibility that his beloved too (*anche tu = et tu, mi fili Brute?*) may lend her tacit support, and in a trivial way (by hearing the trivial *carioca* in the rhythm of the train), to the mechanization of our modern world. Surely a general cultural question is underlying the poem, but this is centered on a personal

concern about the beloved's reaction to the cultural situation (has she herself been "mechanized and trivialized" thereby?)—a concern which is "modern" in that love today searches into strata of the soul which formerly would have been irrelevant for love. Thus the poem does not show only a remainder of humanity, but is pervaded by humanity (by a human concern about a human attitude). Mr. Friedrich has not paid sufficient attention to the most important word (*anche*) in the poem and this, in his hands, has become, like that of Mallarmé about the fan of Mme Mallarmé, too strongly "dehumanized." [3]

All the poems discussed in this overlong review would seem to bear out the truth that modern lyrics, because of their difficult structure, semantic ambiguities, incoherence, and arbitrariness, require to a greater degree than did previous poetry (even medieval poetry) the collaboration with the critic of the philologist who will not abandon prematurely the search for meaning and will warn the critic against explanations that are linguistically impossible. This is, of course, only a consequence of the other truth that modern poets are more "philological," that is, *closer* to language and its requirements (not "*alone with* the language," as Friedrich believes) in their disrealization and dishumanization of poetry than were former poets who concerned

[3] There are a few observations of detail which have not found their place in the preceding discussion. P. 123: to the excellent analysis of Lorca's *El Grito* as a perfect example of "disrealization" and "dehumanization" I should like to add a comment on the clever procedure of the poet who introduces into the poem the cry itself: ¡*ay*! Though we are told at the beginning that the cry goes from mountain to mountain, this cry is not yet formed; it is only in stanza 2 that we are told of the starting point of the cry or rather where (in the olive trees) the cry *will start*: *será*. Only after this announcement can the cry be heard (¡*ay*!). In stanza 3 it *has begun* its acoustic existence (*ha hecho vibrar*), continuing as an echo so that again we must hear ¡*ay*! In stanza 4 it has passed by "the people in their caves" (that it has passed *above* their heads in its passage from mountain to mountain is indicated by the parenthesis), yet still lingers as a vibration in the ether after the poem itself has ended: the last ¡*ay*!—which is placed outside of the parenthesis. It is true that, as Friedrich has felt, human beings here are only a parenthesis in the life of the self-sufficient "ellipsis" of the cry. P. 138: *Ciudad de los estíos* is incorrectly translated 'Wesensstadt' (confusion with *estar*?). P. 151: the *por* in the refrain line of G. Diego's *Insomnio: Tú por tu sueño y por el mar las naves* should not be translated 'through' ('*durch*'), but 'along' (cf. the common phrases *andar por esos mundos, por esas calles*, etc.)—the idea being that the sleeping beloved proceeds on her particular well-defined route (of sleep) as do the ships that ply the sea. The line is an imitation of Lorca's *Romance sonámbule*: "El barco sobre la mar / y el caballo en la montaña" (again, the whole poem reflects the motif of "la regarder dormir" treated by Proust and Valéry). P. 162: "[tes mains] nées dans le miroir clos des miennes" (Eluard): *miroir clos* should not be translated 'umschlossener' but 'umschliessender Spiegel.'

themselves mainly with the imitation of things and man. After these have receded to the background language has become paramount—but language is still addressed to the fellow man!

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